



state senator

Allen Paul

2005 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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Much Accomplished in 2005

A variety of issues didn't make big headlines, but they may make a big impact on Hoosiers

Many feel daylight-saving time and the expansion of the Indianapolis convention center and new stadium dominated the 2005 legislative session, but the General Assembly passed many initiatives that will be beneficial to citizens across Indiana. We addressed issues such as election reform, National Guard benefits, child protection laws, agriculture, and improving health care services. The following are just a few examples of this year's accomplishments:

Elections — We worked hard this session to give voters confidence that our elections will be fair, open and honest. A bill passed that tightens restrictions on obtaining an absentee ballot. The bill does not make registering to vote more difficult; it simply creates new safeguards to protect the rights of honest absentee voters. We also passed legislation that will require voters to show a picture ID issued by the state or federal government (such as a driver's license or state ID card). *Read more on page 3.*



National Guard Benefits — Our National Guard members are serving overseas in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and several other countries. Because of the huge sacrifice these men and women are making on our behalf, we passed a measure that exempts spouses and children of Guard members killed in the line of duty from paying tuition at any state educational institution. *Read more on page 2.*

Child Protection — The General Assembly also passed legislation aimed at protecting Hoosier children. Two bills in particular will enhance the effectiveness of our sex offender and violent offender registry. The bills add the possession of child pornography to the 14 existing offenses and also allow neighborhood associations to receive the semi-annual updates of the list. We also created the Department of Child Services to handle child support, child protection, adoption and foster services. Our children are our

most precious commodity, and should receive special attention from the state. This new department will focus only on children and their families.

Agriculture

— Indiana is one of the nation's top agriculture states. This session, we created the Indiana Department of Agriculture and consolidated duties that were once scattered across numerous agencies. Not only will this be more productive for the agriculture industry in Indiana, but also we hope that it will save taxpayer money by combining several departments into one large department. We also passed legislation that will encourage the use of our soybean and corn crops in the production of alternative fuels. *Read more on page 2.*

Health Care — We passed a bill that creates a panel of experts to develop a medical information system for Indiana. A medical information system would connect physicians' offices, pharmacies, laboratories, imaging centers, hospitals and other medical facilities. If a person became ill in another part of the state, a physician with proper authorization could have immediate access to the person's medications, medical history and lab and X-ray reports. That patient then would receive better, more personalized care. The panel must create a plan that will maintain privacy.

This year's session has been an eventful one, full of activity. Although the session's end has come, my job as your senator is never finished and I am available year-round to assist you.



Sen. Paul works on legislation during session.

Indiana: Open for Business!

Legislature Passes Economic Development Initiatives

This year, lawmakers faced the difficult task of pulling Indiana out of a fiscal crisis. While much of that was done in the crafting of the two-year budget, the only permanent way to ensure financial stability is by creating more jobs and putting more money in Hoosiers' pockets.

To create this economic development, the General Assembly combined ideas from the governor with plans from both the Senate and the House of Representatives. These initiatives came in the form of Senate Enrolled Acts 1 and 496.

These two laws contain dozens of provisions that make the state more attractive to companies looking to relocate, existing businesses wishing to expand and entrepreneurs looking for an incentive to start a business.

One of the most important ideas was a sales tax break for research and development equipment. This will encourage high-tech, innovative jobs that help to improve a state's well-being and reputation. Following the governor's lead, the General Assembly also took particular interest in the motor racing industry. SEA 1 includes provisions that exempt professional motor racing parts from sales tax and adds "professional motor vehicle racing" to the list of businesses that qualify for the Venture Capital Investment Tax Credit.

The 2005 session of the General Assembly may be remembered as one of the most important and aggressive sessions ever for making Indiana open

Rx FOR INDIANA

IMPROVING ACCESS TO PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Governor Mitch Daniels has created "Rx for Indiana," a pharmaceutical patient assistance program which allows lower-income Hoosiers to receive the prescription drugs they need for free or at significantly reduced prices. Since the beginning of the program in early March, more than 37,000 Indiana residents have qualified for the program.

Nearly 60 health care, business, community and consumer groups have joined the governor to help improve Indiana citizens' access to prescription medicine. The Rx for Indiana program was developed to build upon the success of other national programs, as it links patients with information about pharmaceutical assistance programs provided by companies and the state and federal government.

Rx for Indiana provides residents access to information about more than 275 public and private prescription assistance programs that provide more than 1,800 medications. In order to take part in the program, Indiana residents must answer a few short questions to verify eligibility. The resident will then be informed of the pharmaceutical patient assistance programs for which he or she qualifies.

Rx for Indiana can save individuals thousands of dollars per year. Before the establishment of Rx for Indiana, only about one in 10 Hoosiers were taking advantage of the reduced cost medicines available. We hope that with the creation of this program, many more Hoosiers will be able to access the medications they need.

To apply for the Rx for Indiana program, visit www.rxforindiana.com or call toll-free 1-877-793-0765. The Web site is available in Spanish and English, and Spanish-speaking telephone operators are available.

Sen. Paul had a 100% voting attendance record in 2005.

Booster Seat Law Takes Effect

Last year, the General Assembly passed House Enrolled Act 1098-2004, more commonly known as the Child Restraint Bill. This bill requires children under 8 years old to sit in child restraint systems that allow the vehicle's seatbelt to work properly. The new law goes into effect on July 1 of this year.

It is important that all parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, babysitters, and others who transport children are aware of this new law.

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ABOVE: Sen. Paul works on a constituent matter with his legislative assistant, Tracy.

Increased Benefits for Indiana National Guard

Since 1801, the Indiana National Guard has served our state in countless wars, battles and statewide disasters. In fact, Indiana Guard members have served in every American war since the Civil War. Today, members of the Indiana Guard are serving overseas in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and several other countries.

Because of the important work of these men and women, members of the Indiana General Assembly have authored a measure to protect the Guard and their families. Senate Enrolled Act 304 extends the tuition exemption to children of National Guard members killed on state active duty. Currently, this benefit applies only to dependents of those members killed on federal active duty. This measure helps support those dependents and spouses who endure financial difficulties after losing a loved one in active duty.

The Senate believes the role of National Guard members deserves special recognition due to their increased responsibilities. Prior to Sept. 11, 2001, the National Guard helped states primarily in the aftermath of natural disasters. The group now functions as one of the state's most important homeland security tools. They devote their time, their energy and their lives to keep Hoosiers safe.

The General Assembly also passed a bill this session that requires the state police department to provide and pay for health coverage for the surviving spouse and dependent children of state police officers killed in the line of duty. From 1933 through 2003, 42 Indiana State Police officers lost their lives in the line of duty. The number of these officers who left behind survivors is unknown.

I believe these initiatives are the right thing to do. These public servants risk too much, train too hard, and work too long to go without these important benefits.

Good News for Agriculture

Paul works for more biofuel use and new department

Agriculture is one of the largest and most important industries in Indiana. As one of the nation's leaders in a vast array of agricultural areas, it would probably come as a surprise to most Hoosiers that, prior to this legislative session, our state had no official Department of Agriculture.

Indiana was one of only four states that operated without an official Department of Agriculture. The other three – Alaska, Arkansas, and Rhode Island – come as little surprise, but our state ranks second in the nation in the amount of prime farmland, and a one-stop entity that would handle all of our agriculture issues would greatly benefit this industry.

House Enrolled Act 1008, which I co-sponsored, created the official Indiana State Department of Agriculture and consolidates duties that were once scattered across numerous agencies.

The move costs Indiana taxpayers no additional money. In fact, I hope it actually saves money by merging the 10 separate agriculture boards and commissions into one large department. Indiana is one of the nation's top agriculture states. This new law will enable us to take full economic advantage of one of our state's traditional strengths.

I authored Senate Bill 123, a bill requiring that the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) be granted the opportunity to revoke the approval for a confined feeding operation (CFO) if there have been at least three violations for that CFO or water pollution control laws during the past two years. Unfortunately, this bill did not make receive a hearing in the House, but it has been assigned to a summer study committee to further research the issue.



Also, two significant clean energy initiatives have passed the Indiana General Assembly and have become law.

House Enrolled Act 1032 requires state government to fuel state vehicles with agriculture-based fuels, such as biodiesel, ethanol, or gasohol, whenever possible. Biodiesel is a clean burning alternative fuel, produced from

domestic, renewable resources, such as soybeans. Biodiesel contains no petroleum, but it can be blended at any level with petroleum diesel. This helps improve air quality and our economy by taking advantage of resources from right here in Indiana.

Senate Enrolled Act 378 will expand the tax incentives passed during the 2003 legislative session on the production and use of Indiana soy diesel and ethanol fuels and provide additional incentives for clean coal gasification plants. This bill covers all facets of processing – from soybean crushers to oil refineries to the service stations that will supply the fuel – while growing the demand for agricultural commodities and increasing farmers' profits. Ethanol production plants cost around \$79 million to build and don't receive these tax breaks until they are making a profit in our state.

SEA 378 provides an additional \$5 million for bio-diesel production, which will be divided into \$1 million sections for the refineries, wholesale, blenders, and service stations that carry the fuel. The bill also expands the tax credit from \$10 million to \$20 million for large ethanol and soy diesel production plants. This will provide a great opportunity for both soy diesel and ethanol plants. Additionally, SEA 378 provides tax credits for companies who build and operate integrated coal gasification power plants in Indiana. Coal gasification is the process of using Indiana's high sulfur-coal and transforming it into clean burning energy.

Our state's use of coal has not kept up with our production. Since 1987, coal consumption in Indiana has increased by 30 percent, while Indiana's coal production has increased by only 3 percent. Currently, over half of the coal used to generate electricity is imported into Indiana. If Indiana coal were to replace imported coal, it would add \$1.35 billion and 18,000 jobs to our state's economy.

These measures are great achievements for our environment and our economy. I hope that we can take full advantage of these alternative sources of energy and make Indiana a leader on this issue.

SEA 193 — I authored this bill, which authorizes the War Memorials Commission to establish the Indiana War Memorials Foundation, Inc. This group will promote public support for war memorials and make sure they are maintained and restored.

HEA 1501— This bill establishes the position of inspector general, an employee of the governor, who works to weed out corruption. Years of scandal in previous administrations cost the state at least \$25 million; we may never know the full extent of misspending.

Emphasizing Education

Senator Paul supports new initiatives

Improving education in Indiana is always a top priority in the General Assembly. This year, the state tackled several key issues to improve education while providing a safe environment and the skills necessary to succeed in life.

Currently, state law requires children to be five years old on July 1 of a school year to be eligible to attend kindergarten, making Hoosier children the oldest kindergarten students in the country. This year, we passed a bill moving the kindergarten enrollment date to include children who turn five years old no later than August 1 of the 2006-2007 school year. While state law does not require parents to enroll children who may not be ready for kindergarten, children who turn five during the summer months are now welcome in our schools.

Charter schools have been operating in Indiana since 2001. These innovative public schools are providing new learning opportunities for Hoosier students, including a large number of at-risk students who were falling behind in a more traditional educational setting. The General Assembly addressed some of the problems which have surfaced in recent years. In particular, there was a bill that addressed funding and reporting issues and provided more parity with other public schools.

Another important initiative requires students, beginning in 2008-2009, to complete the Core 40 curriculum in order to graduate from high school. This program of study requires no additional credits but rather calls for fewer electives and more math, science and social studies classes to fulfill the 40 credit requirement for graduation. There are exceptions for some students whose parents object and for special education students. The bill also requires that parents be notified when a student is in danger of failing the Core 40 requirements and graduate qualifying exam. Four-year public universities will require

applicants to complete these Core 40 requirements for admission.

The Legislature wants to give students every tool available to succeed in higher education and in life. We passed a bill this session that requires all school corporations to enter into written agreements regarding credit for high school students taking early college courses. Currently, school corporations merely have the option of entering into these agreements. We hope to further level the playing field by giving students in all school corporations access to these classes.

If we expect our children to perform and excel in academics, we must also do everything possible to make sure they feel safe at school. The Senate passed a new law this year to require schools to adopt rules prohibiting bullying and take steps to prevent this aggressive behavior, including staff training in identifying, and intervening in bullying.

Finally, the General Assembly pushed through legislation dealing with the dropout epidemic currently impacting our schools. The Indianapolis Star published an editorial board series last month dealing with this issue. The newspaper reported that about three of every 10 students drop out of Indiana high schools. In some districts, the drop out rate is dramatically higher, with only one in three students receiving a diploma. According to a Manhattan Institute study, Indiana's graduation rate ranks 30th in the nation. Conversely, the figures collected by the state Department of Education paint a very different picture.

Finally, the legislature changed the way graduation rates are calculated and required schools to include all withdrawing students in the determination of a school's graduation rate, with exceptions made for those relocating to other schools. This bill also contains a provision requiring schools to report reasons for suspensions and expulsions, as well as the suspended or expelled student's gender, ethnicity, and disability status. In order to craft effective public policy dealing with these vital issues, we must first know the full extent of the problem.

I authored **Senate Enrolled Act 634**, which allows the Department of Insurance (DOI) to enter into an interstate insurance compact. The compact is intended to protect the interest of consumers of individual and group annuity, life insurance, disability income, and long-term care insurance products, as well as develop uniform standards for insurance products. This bill was signed by the governor.

I authored **Senate Enrolled Act 140**, which prohibits the Department of Revenue from establishing specific rules requiring charitable gaming establishments to give a certain amount of their revenues to charitable organizations from the net revenue. Currently, there is a set percentage required. This bill was signed by the governor.



ABOVE: Sen. Paul addresses the full Senate.

Fighting Voter Fraud

Voting in a fair and credible election is at the heart of American citizenship. It is the Legislature's responsibility to adopt policies that protect our representative democracy by ensuring each vote cast is valid and legal.

Senate Enrolled Act 483 requires citizens to show government-issued photo identification at the polls before voting. Photo IDs are required for many commonplace circumstances that Americans face every day, like renting a video or obtaining a library card. It only makes sense that a photo ID be required for something as important as voting.

Years ago, poll workers knew the people in their precinct and had no reason to question someone's identity. Now, it is increasingly common for Election Day volunteers to live in another town or city than the one in which they are serving. The voter ID bill gives poll workers a tool to verify a person's identity. Considering recent nationwide voting problems, and some within Indiana, this is a common-sense step to help prevent fraud.

The Bureau of Motor Vehicles has agreed to grant photo IDs free of charge to those who cannot pay. Residents of state-licensed nursing homes are exempt from showing identification if a polling place is located in the facility where they reside.

Voters who show up at the polls without identification will be able to fill out a provisional ballot. They then will be required to visit the county clerk or election board's office and show an ID or object on religious grounds.

This simple change in the rules will inspire more confidence in the election process and in our state government. Legislators want to protect voters' rights and assure that every vote is counted fairly and equally.